State of Education

At the time of the revolution the state of education was extremly low. Though there had been previous to that time increased attention to the cause of education: though the mind of the people had been waking up to its importance: yet attention had been directed rather to the founding of colleges and seminaries of learning than to the primary schools of education. Colleges had been estabd at Scio Hydra and one or two other places in Greece, besides several colleges and schools in foreign countries; which perhaps were by far the most efficient. These institutions especially those in foreign countries originated with and were sustained by public spirited and patriotic Greek merchants who resided in those countries. In addition to these sources of education many of the Greek youth repaired to European universities: a practice common as is evident from the fact that when the revolution broke out they collected to the number of 600 in Wallachia under the command of Ypsilantes. Enrolling themselves into a company called the sacred band and inscribing on their banner "freedom or death" they marched against their countrys enemy and were cut down to nearly a man. These institutions prepared the minds of the people, they scattered abroad the seeds of liberty and prepared the way for the out breaking of that storm which was to

purify and renovate their country. Yet Sampsons like in destroying the enemies of their country they pulled down destruction on their own heads. So that Greece in 1829 was almost entirely destitute of the means of education. It is true there were village schools scattered through the country, but of what account were they when the masters were profoundly ignorant and the books employed in them were in a language which the teachers rarely understood and the pupils never.

The instructors says Mr Anderson "were usually parish priests who thus sought to augment their pittance of support. The books – a very small spelling book, a collection of prayers, and the Psalter were all in antient Greek." From these schools the girls were excluded while the boys by attending learned only words without ideas. The people had however to a good extent learned the inefficiency of the system and had become dissatisfied with it, so much so that even the peasants could call them "false schools". In consequence of this the characteristic desire of the Greeks after knowledge led them immediately after the revolution as we have already stated to make efforts for diffusing the benefits of education. In some places the subscriptions were headed by the priests themselves who from the resources of their convents contributed largely to the cause.

None of the clergy opposed except some of the catholics though

many of them did nothing to promote the object. Numerous schools were established both Lancesterian & Hellenste, that is schools for teaching antient Greek. Indeed under the administration of Capo Distrias the plan was formed of establishing 1 a general system of primary schools on the plan of mutual instruction. 2 establishing classical schools in the several provinces. and 3 a national university. All these were to acknowledge the bible as the basis of instruction as is evident from the language of the President who says while these (that is the teachers) are preparing, all the articles in the mean time must be provided which are necessary to the organization of these establishments. In the number of these articles I cause to be entered the Bible, N Test, and the Psalms all in Modern Greek.

So short was the period of the Presidents administration that but little was done towards carrying this noble plan into effect A few school were commenced and among others a classical at Egina for preparing teachers. In 1831 besides the schools of an inferior order the number of classical schools had increased to 76 and is probably double that at present. What measures King Otho has taken to promote education we have no means of ascertaining precisely. Mr King speking on this subject says, the laws concerning common schools in Greece were published in Feb

of the present year (1833) and are embraced in 83 articles. They evince a laudable disposition on the part of gov to extend the benefits of a common education to all the people and the means by which it aims to do this appear to be wisely adopted in general to the present character and circumstances of the Greeks. How far the present gov has succeeded in affording the means of education throughout the country we cannot accurately learn. Says one of the Greek papers "education advances gigantically everywhere on the continent. There is not a town city or village scarcely in which there is not a Hellenic and mutual instruction school and if there be any destitute of such a good thing it proceeds from a want of teachers not from a want of money or love of knowledge. This statement is probably exaggerated in some degree. The school for teachers is now transferred to Napoli and Dr Korck English missionary appointed its director and also general inspector of all the common schools in Greece. This appointment would seem to be peculiarly important in its bearing on the moral education of the Greeks. His applications to the missionaries for books for the schools have been frequent. In this and other ways the mission-books have been extensively circulated and used. a fact of great importance considering the good such books may and must do and the utter destitution of book of native origin.

At the time Mr Anderson visited Greece (1829) they had no such thing as a spelling book, the only spelling lessons in use were on cards and of them there was a great scarcity. As to reading books in the whole tour through the Peloponessus he found in two schools a few copies of the N. Test: two copies of Goldsmiths history of Greece in one school and Nikitopolos epitome of the Gospels in four. He found arithmetic taught in but four schools: Geography was taught in but two instances
This scarcity of books was chiefly owing to the fact that books were not to be obtained there being but few in the country and few in the language. The same or but little better was the state of the case in 1834 when Mr King received information of the enactment of a law by the Greek gov in which the Scriptures and the most important publications of the missionary presses were prescribed as among the books to be used in the schools throughout the country. From this it would appear that the gov is not hostile to the missionaries. As early as 1830 Mr King received in the Gov gazette a very favorable notice in regard to his labors. The priests however find means of interrupting and retarding their labors occasionally: and there is nothing impossible in the supposition that they may stop the labors of the missionaries, though from past efforts not at all probable. In 1834 when the Greek church

receive its present organisation the Holy council whose business includes the supervision of books used among the people, obtained from Eve an order to prevent all distribution of books except by direct permission in the place where they were distributed. This was a great point gained by the priests, but a sore difficulty to the miss. Yet even at this time they found means to avoid the difficulty by not distributing the books themselves but by sending them out according to orders received. So that so long as the prohibition existed the priests were foiled in their object and in the latter part of 1838 Mr King & Riggs obtained an unlimited permission of the minister of the interior to distribute book among the villages of Greece. As we have already stated orders from the different schools for books are frequent so that Mr King said in March last he had need of 10.000 copies of the N. Test in modern greek.

During the last summer another attempt has been made by the ecclesiastics to put a period to missionary labor, directed more particularly towards the school at Syra one of the oldest largest and most flourishing schools in the country. It would seem however that they had attempted too much. The missionaries have taken too strong hold of the confidence and affections of the people. the people have become too much enlightened to sit quietly in darkness. The spirit of enquiry has gone forth and cannot be recalled.

though they have for a time succeeded in putting down some of the schools. their efforts have been too unreasonable and violent and hence the missionaries confidently anticipate a reaction in their favor: and in some places the bishops have already written to let the schools be open under some small restriction. Two sensible and spirited replies to the attack of the priests, written by intelligent Greeks in behalf of the schools have issued from the native presses and been well received by all but the ecclesiastics and the more bigoted. This power, the press, must soon if it does not at present say to ecclesiastical interference thus far shalt thou go and no farther. Says a late letter of one of the missionaries, the liberty of the press in free Greece is exerting a happy influence both politically and ecclesiastically not only within the confines of that small kingdom but among the Greeks in other nations. Some striking illustrations of this might be mentioned among events which have recently transpired. There are two or three spirited journals now in Greece conducted with considerable ability, which cry out against abuses in Church and state with all the energy and freedom which characterize the public journals of the U S. The effect of the different Mission schools must be considerable to say nothing of the others which contain about 800 that of Mr King containing 170 must exert a great influence on

the church; instructed as they are not only in the important branches of a liberal education but also in the Scriptures. What must be the effect on the saint-worship of the Church of such instruction as the following. After having unfolded to his students the argument for the superiority of Christ to the angels drawn from the command to worship him, Mr King asked if the argument would hold in case we were commanded to worship angels or men? The students at once saw and acknowledged the force of the appeal. One effect of such instruction has already been that a young man who had gone from Mr King's gymnasium to that of the gov openly refused to believe any thing in religion but what the Scriptures teach and persists in the determination. This is the leaven which we may hope will leaven the whole lump. The instruction and public preaching of Mr King and the other Miss, the wide circulation of the Scriptures in the schools of the country and several of the public journals conspire to produce this effect. The gov is at present friendly and though the ecclesiastics are hostile they have as yet failed in every instance of opposition. Yet the work must go on comparatively slow, the leaven must have time to operate. Hence there is not so much need of more laborers in this field as means to enlarge the influence of those already there, especially the means for distributing books. The main body of the work must be done by natives not by foreigners: this is evident from the nature of the case. The following is from a late letter of Mr Houston. I think we have reason to hope that within the course of a few years after the best models for schools and books have been fully exhibited to the people of these countries, that the work of reform will be taken out of the hands of the missionaries at least as far as the drudgery of the works is concerned.